1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

the divide. Some of these Indians settled around Frances Lake and Pelly River and remain there today.

Ideas of Christianity had undoubtedly long percolated through the Kaska area from the eastern peoples who were near the Oblate settlements on the Mackenzie and Fort Nelson Rivers. An Oblate made a brief visit to Fort Halkett in the middle of the nineteenth century, but no direct contact with religious leaders began until relatively late.

Around 1900 a Protestant missionary, Pallgrave, began to visit the Kaska. His preaching, which was conducted out of doors, was strongly directed against witch torture, but he also taught a few men the rudiments of writing. Selecting influential men he encouraged these to exert a moral influence on the other people. After freezing his foot by stepping into an overflow (water seeping through river ice), Pallgrave was replaced by English. The latter minister is reported to have remarked that he found the Kaska "too wild." He was followed by Thorman whose son, Fred, is the current Protestant minister at Telegraph Creek. About 1925 a Catholic church and mission school were established at Telegraph Creek. Sometime toward the close of the nineteenth century the Prophet Cult made its appearance in the Kaska area. The movement appears to have been inspired by Catholic ceremonialism and its weak development in the Cassiar was probably at least in part a result of the limited influence of Catholicism on the Kaska tribes.[46]

Among the Pelly River Indians, where the Upper Liard Indians encountered this movement, the leader of the cult was Gulai'i ("Helps the People"). This man was a Ross River shaman who affected ragged clothes, refused to cut his hair, and carried a drum. He is said to have been provided with a piece of skin on which was drawn a picture of people following in a line to heaven.[47] At assemblages, the prophet talked of God and sometimes threw pieces of meat and fat into the fire, also feeding small pieces to people. He told the people not to eat moose feet or they would be unable to use their own feet.[48] He also stuck a small piece of a feather into the hair of every person present. To some Indians he distributed amulets, consisting of smooth flat stones, the size of a quarter. These, he directed, were to be sewn into a piece of skin and worn next to the heart suspended from around the neck.[49] On other occasions he sang from a skin which was shaped like a book and accompanied himself on a drum. It was said that if blood dropped from the "book" good luck could be expected in hunting. The prophet often demonstrated his power by predicting the arrival of strangers. Gulai'i did not care for the Protestant missionaries, claiming that they did not speak the truth. He was, however, favorably disposed to the Catholic Church.

A Kaska Indian, George Steele, who had spent many years in Fort Nelson before re-

[46] Spier, however, points out that the Prophet Cult of the Northern Athapaskans may have been influenced by the Prophet Dance of the northern plateau. See Spier, *The Prophet Dance of the Northwest and Its Derivatives* (1935).

[47] "Maps" of this kind were a common feature of the Northern Athapaskan Prophet Cult. See Honigmann, *Ethnography and Acculturation of the Fort Nelson Slave* (1946), 130–134.

[48] Both the taboo on moose feet and feeding the fire are aboriginal religious elements which, in some form, still survive among the Kaska today. The feeding of meat and the distribution of feathers mentioned below hearken of communism.

[49] This practice seems to have been influenced by the Catholic scapula.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

175 177 turning to Lower Post, is said to have had possession of a map showing trails to heaven. The map, Indians reported, found its way into the hands of Catholic missionaries and was blessed by the bishop. In the Dease River area, a ceremony occurred that may have contained overtones of the Prophet Dance as described by Spier. A shaman would play his drum and sing while the people danced. This was referred to as "praying to God." The shaman also dreamed to foretell the future. As a result of participating in the dance, men secured good luck for hunting. The Bear Lake Sekani are also said to have had a prophet who performed a "kind of Mass." Further west the Taku developed a movement along similar lines. The prophet would preach and once, while he was doing so, his wife took a knife out of his pocket, as he was not supposed to carry a knife while performing religious rites.

175 177 *Recent history.* Between 1908 and 1910 the Kaska and Tahltan Indians pooled resources with other British Columbia tribes to fight the Registered Trap Line Act of the Province. According to local informants a Kaska spokesman, Ena?inta ("He Watches the People"), declared that the Indians had existed before the white man and could continue to live without his laws. The Indians demanded the right to trap anywhere without interference, [648] but their case was lost. The anthropologist-folklorist, James (locally, "Jimmy") Teit, aided the Indians in this legal move and was secretary of the intertribal organization.[48]

Around 1904 the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly of trade in Lower Post was challenged by John Hyland, who built a store in that settlement which, twenty-two years later, was sold to Oscar Anderson. In the late thirties the establishment was acquired by Bill Strong who already owned a trading company in Telegraph Creek and had formerly traded up the Taku River. He named the establishment Taku Trading Company and continues to operate it through an agent (Pl. 1, a).

In 1913, in a report to the National Museum in Ottawa, Poole Field, a local prospector and trapper and formerly a Hudson's Bay trader in Fort Simpson,[49] commented on the prevalence of tuberculosis among the Cassiar tribes. "Tuberculosis seems to be the strongest of all diseases amongst them. A few years ago they were dieing off fast but it seems to have killed all the sickly ones and left the strongest and healthy ones as they are now on the increase and very little sickness amongst them of any kind."[50]

The year 1920 saw a strike of a different character from those made by miners take place in the Dease River basin. The Indians employed to line boats up that river struck for higher wages. The Hudson's Bay Company at McDame Creek had been paying liners $2.50 a day; they now demanded $5.00 daily. The work was hard and required long hours. Lining began at five o'clock in the morning and often continued until eight at night. Six men were required to pull the boat, while in the craft were a captain and tiller man. The leader of the strike was Big Joe, a Pelly River Indian, and under his leadership the strikers won their demands.

For many years reports of witch hunting emanating from the Kaska area had given those tribes an unfavorable reputation. In 1924 this notoriety was intensified when Fred Allen, a

[48] See Boas, *James A Teit* (1922); Boas, *James A. Teit* (1923). The allegation of Indians that Teit absconded to the United States with the funds of this organization (see below, pp. 173) is patently false and deserves serious refutation.

[49] Godsell, *Romance of the Alaska Highway* (1944), 87.

[50] Field, Unpublished Manuscript (1913), 10.